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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

of his charge to the greed for personal gain. " We heartily pray thee to send thy holy spirit into the hearts of them that possess the grounds, pastures, and dwelling-places of the earth, that they, remembering themselves to be thy tenants, may not rack and stretch out the rents of their houses and lands, nor yet take unreasonable fines and incomes, after the manner of covetous worldlings . . . but so behave themselves in letting out their tenements, lands and pastures, that after this life they may be received into everlasting dwelling places." -Thus, while the covetous worldlings disposed the goods of this transitory life to their liking, did a pious monarch consider their eternal welfare in the Book of Private Prayer issued & 1553-

(ii)

Religious Theory and Social Policy

If a philosophy of society is to be effective, it must be as mobile and realistic as the forces which it would control. The weakness of an attitude which met the onset of insurgent economic interests with a generalized appeal to traditional morality and an idealization of the past was only too obvious. Shocked, confused, thrown on to a helpless, if courageous and eloquent, defensive by changes even in the slowly moving world of agriculture, mediaeval social theory,

to which the most representative minds of
the English
Church still clung, found itself swept off its
feet after
the middle of the century by the swift rise of
a com-
mercial civilization, in which all traditional
landmarks
seemed one by one to be submerged. The
issue over
which the struggle between the new
economic move-
ments of the age and the scheme of
economic ethics
expounded by churchmen was most definitely
joined, and
continued longest, was not, as the modern
reader might
be disposed to expect, that of wages, but
that of credit,